



State of Arizona
Department of Education

Tom Horne
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

M E M O R A N D U M

January 11, 2006

SPED 06-03

TO: Directors of Special Education
District Testing Coordinators
BIA, Special Education Coordinators
Parent Organizations

FROM: Joanne C. Phillips, Deputy Associate Superintendent
Steve Mishlove, Director of Special Programs
Exceptional Student Services

SUBJECT: Public Participation on Alternate Standards for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

The Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS), would like to invite parents, teachers, and administrators involved with alternate assessments to participate in a public forum on the Alternate Academic Content Standards. If those involved are unable to attend the forum, we extend the invitation to complete the related Alternate Academic Content Standards survey.

Under No Child Left Behind, States may define alternate achievement standards that will be used to evaluate the achievement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These standards and the related assessments must be aligned with the academic content standards for the grades in which students are enrolled. Accordingly, Arizona's Alternate Academic Content Standards have been developed to align with grade-level standards, although the content is reduced in complexity. These standards are expanded benchmarks of performance that were developed with three levels of difficulty, employing a process also used in Massachusetts.

In order to prepare for the public forums, participants should review the Alternate Academic Content Standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and science; the grade 3 performance level descriptors; and the survey questions located at www.ade.az.gov/standards. Select *Public Forums and Survey January 2006*. If you are unable to attend and wish to take the survey instead, review the same information first prior to completing the survey. Teachers administering alternate assessments may also access this information on the home page of the Alternate Assessment application, which opened on January 4, 2006.

The draft documents will be revised based on comments received through the public forums and surveys. These revised documents will be submitted to the State Board of Education for consideration and approval. It is anticipated that approved expanded benchmarks will be used in developing grade-level alternate assessments that will reflect not only high expectations but also a continuum of learning possibilities.

The public forums have been scheduled for:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
February 27, 2006	1:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Flagstaff Unified School District Governing Board Room 3285 E. Sparrow Avenue Flagstaff, AZ
February 28, 2006	1:00 – 5:00 p.m.	ADE Central Building Administration Training Room 170 &180 2005 N. Central Avenue Phoenix, AZ
March 2, 2006	1:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Tucson Unified School District Maroon Room 1010 E. Tenth Street Tucson, AZ

If you are unable to attend, but would like to submit comments, complete the survey located at www.ade.az.gov/standards and forward by **March 2, 2006** to:

Judith Croswell
Arizona Department of Education
Exceptional Student Services
1535 West Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85007

or

E-mail: Judith.Croswell@azed.gov